

The Invasion of Italy

83

mour, and the weight of their onslaught was calculated to crush either horse or foot upon which it was directed. But Constantine disposed his forces so as to avoid their charge and render their weight useless, and when these horsemen fled for shelter to Turin they found the gates closed against them and perished almost to a man. Milan, by far the most important city in the Transpadane region, next received Constantine, who entered amid the plaudits of the citizens, and charmed the eyes of the Milanese ladies, says the Panegyrist, without causing them anxieties for their virtue. Milan, indeed, welcomed him with open arms; other cities sent deputations similar to the one which, according to the epitomist Zonaras, had already reached him from Rome itself, praying him to come as its liberator. It seemed, indeed, that he had already won not only the Transpadane region, but Rome itself.*

Constantine, however, had still to meet and overthrow the chief armies of Maxentius in the north of Italy. These were under the command of Ruricius Pompeianus, a general as stubborn as he was loyal, and of well-tried capacity. Pompeianus held Verona in force. He had thrown out a large body of cavalry towards Brescia to reconnoitre and check Constantine's advance, but these were routed with some slaughter and retired in confusion. If we may interpret the presence of Pompeianus at Verona as indicating that Maxentius had feared attack by Licinius more than by Constantine, this would

* *Pan. Vet.*, ix., 7.